

BCYC SABOT RACING DEVELOPMENT C3/C2

5 TIPS TO IMPROVING YOUR BOATSPEED

Introduction

There are three key aspects that go into winning any sailboat race: How fast can you go, how well can you turn the boat, how well did you play the wind.

Out of these three things, the most important thing for new racers to focus on, is making the boat go as fast as you can. In C3s and C2s no one is going full speed so if you work on improving your speed you'll have a huge advantage.

Ways of improving Speed

1. Perfect Sail Trim: Having good sail trim is probably the easiest way of picking up some speed. Specifically, having perfect trim on the upwind angle, the first leg of your course and most common angle to be on. In the Sabot, Perfect upwind trim is usually seen by having the tip of the boom be just inside the back corner of your boat. This is where you want it for medium wind conditions around 7 kts. If it's lighter than 7 you will have the boom right above the corner of your boat or even just outside if it's very light. If it gets windier, you can pull it in even further maybe 6 inches inside the corner when you're sitting on the rail.
2. No rudder movements: Your rudder is essentially a brake pedal in a car. Everytime you use the rudder to turn your boat, it slows down, no matter what. If this is true, one of the best things we can do for our speed is to move the tiller as rarely as possible. This doesn't mean you can never turn. I do encourage you to focus hard on how much you move your rudder at all times, especially when you're only trying to go in a straight line.
3. Sailing the right angle: This again applies mostly to the Upwinds but some of it applies to downwind too. In any type of racing on a course, there's an ideal "line" to take throughout the course to finish it in the fastest way possible. In Sailing, we call this line the rum line, or the shortest distance you can travel. Downwind this can be applied simply: Sailing a straight line to the next mark no gybes is usually your best bet. For Upwind, you cannot sail a straight line, so instead we need to try and make it as straight as possible by always sailing our best upwind angle. This means good sail trim and not pinching or footing. Many of you have heard of pinching but it's important that we don't foot either. Footing is sailing lower than your best angle. Pinching is too close to irons.
4. Moving softly in the boat: This is a big one especially in light air in the Sabot. The Sabot is very light and thin and can flex easily so we need to be very cautious about how we

move in the boat. You should look to land every step you take as softly as possible so that the boat doesn't shake. Every time you shake the boat it rocks the wind out of your sails and the flow off the bottom of your boat. You want to find a way to flow through your turns so that the boat doesn't even feel like you're in it. Learning to be perfectly smooth is hard, but any improvements in that direction will greatly improve your speed.

5. Don't Tack or Gybe (a lot): Every time you tack or gybe the boat you slow it down greatly. Every tack that you do can lose you 2 boat lengths or even more depending on the wind. Even if you have the best tacks out there you still slow down compared to someone who didn't tack. Gybes are not quite as bad but you still definitely slow down. Be conscious of your maneuvers and try to do as few as possible.

Conclusion

Boat Speed is the combination of these things mentioned as well as many others. If you can be diligent and remember all of these factors you will see a serious improvement in your speed. Like I said in the beginning, speed is the most important thing. Until you are fast, tactics don't even matter.